

partners in the six-party dialog, you know, by working together. The question is, over time, will all parties adhere to the agreement?

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi; Vice Adm. Thad W. Allen, USCG, U.S. Coast Guard Chief of Staff; and Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat of Thailand September 19, 2005

President Bush. It's been my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of Thailand back to the—to Washington. Thank you for coming, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Thaksin. Thank you.

President Bush. Laura and I were just talking the other evening about what a wonderful visit we had to your country when you hosted APEC. It's reminded me—when I was thinking about that visit, reminded me of our close friendship. The Prime Minister is a person who believes in markets and free enterprise and freedom. And I'm really, really pleased he's here.

We had a—we talked about a lot of subjects. One subject that I'm particularly interested in is avian flu and the need for our countries to work together. Thailand is a leader in putting systems in place that will track the virus as it attacks different birds and watches very carefully to make sure that there's no bird-to-human transmission in his country. He's willing to work in the neighborhood, for which I'm grateful. All of us need to be mindful of this potentially devastating disease. And we've got a good friend and a very thoughtful leader when it comes to that subject.

We talked about North Korea. We talked about the neighborhood. We talked about our economies. We would like to get a free trade agreement concluded here as

quickly as possible, and the Prime Minister made that very clear to me.

All in all, it was a very good visit, covering a lot of subjects, and I'm not surprised, because I'm visiting with a good friend.

So, welcome, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Thaksin. Thank you, Mr. President. It's my pleasure to visit Washington, DC, again. It's my third time during Prime Ministership, and this trip I have been—discussed with the President about the bilateral and also the regional—in Asia as well. And we had a very good conversation.

I committed to President Bush that we are pressing ahead with the FTA, and also we will work closely with U.S. by drafting the plan of action in the cooperation between our two countries and also with the third country as well if the two countries would like to work together with, in helping or in working with other countries.

I also want to welcome the President to meet with the ASEAN seven during APEC meeting in November in Korea.

President Bush. Finally, I do want to thank the Prime Minister and His Majesty for sending relief supplies to our folks that have been affected by Hurricane Katrina. This good country has just come through a tsunami, and they're on their way to recovery. And yet they were able to, through their—because of their generous hearts,

ship help. And so thanks very much, and please thank His Majesty for his generous contribution to the folks down there.

Thank you, sir. Appreciate it. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:52 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to King Phumiphon Adunyadet of Thailand.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat of Thailand *September 19, 2005*

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat met today to reaffirm the strength of the U.S.-Thai alliance and the importance of bilateral cooperation in regional and global affairs. Both leaders recognized the special and enduring bonds between the two countries as well as between the American and Thai people, demonstrated most recently by the close cooperation following last December's devastating tsunami and after Hurricane Katrina. President Bush expressed his admiration for the resilience and determination of the Thai people and government in rebuilding areas affected by the tsunami and pledged continued U.S. assistance. The President noted Thailand's effort to mobilize support for an establishment of a regional tsunami early warning system.

Prime Minister Thaksin once again expressed his profound condolences for American casualties and the devastation from Hurricane Katrina. President Bush expressed his appreciation for His Majesty the King of Thailand's donations for the people affected by Hurricane Katrina and for Thailand's dispatch of emergency relief supplies.

The two leaders welcomed the expanding and deepening security cooperation that has followed Thailand's designation as a Major Non-NATO Ally and discussed plans to inaugurate a senior-level bilateral dialogue on strategic and security issues in Bangkok this fall. They also directed their officials to work together on a comprehensive Plan of Action covering all major areas of coopera-

tion, aiming to serve as a roadmap to maximize the benefits arising from close and productive U.S.-Thai relations. In that context, the two leaders emphasized the importance of trilateral cooperation to support economic and social development in countries where both the U.S. and Thailand are working.

The two leaders discussed the importance of stepping up efforts to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and pledged to explore cooperation in the Proliferation Security Initiative. The President noted the outstanding cooperation by U.S. and Thai military forces in this year's Cobra Gold joint exercises.

Both leaders expressed concern over current trends in Burma. Stressing their shared objectives of promoting democracy and national reconciliation in Burma, both sides agreed to have closer consultations on this matter. The two leaders noted that they had called for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other jailed political activists when they met in 2003 and reiterated that this step was necessary for a credible process of political dialogue for all parties.

Prime Minister Thaksin briefed President Bush on Bangkok's efforts to deal with the violence in southern Thailand while preserving the democratic freedom that has made Thailand a leader in Southeast Asia. The President commended the Prime Minister's creation of a National Reconciliation Commission aimed at developing a broad-based approach to the South that combines